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# The Catholic Church and the War

**By Norman Murray**

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"And while men slept the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way."

The great European war which started in August, 1914, and is still going on with increased fury in September, 1916, has opened the eyes of many people to dangers of whose existence they little dreamed before. Outside of the military clique in Germany, few people in other countries were aware of the ambition for world power which the Prusian Junkers cherished. Another great surprise in store for many who believed in human progress was the policy of frightfulness and terrorism with which the war has been carried on. No one outside of Germany suspected that ruthless war would be made by airships and under-water craft on defenseless noncombatants and even on neutrals.

Another great surprise in store was the indifference and apathy of the Roman Catholic part of the population of the British Empire. The situation in the Catholic portion of Ireland and in Quebec is almost identical, with a little to the good in favor of Catholic Ireland in the matter of recruiting for the British Army. The population of Quebec is about half that of Ireland, with about the same proportion of Catholics and Protestants in each—three Catholics to one Protestant in Ireland, and about four to one Protestant in Quebec.

In Ireland the statistics under the voluntary system give 75,000 recruits from the 1,000,000 of the Protestant population and 25,000 from the 3,000,000 Roman Catholics. In the two largest provinces in Canada the population is for Ontario 2,500,000 and for Quebec 2,000,000. The recruits thus far have been 150,000 from Ontario and 37,000 from Quebec. If Quebec had done as well as Ontario the recruits would have been about 120,000 instead of 37,000. Of the 37,000 men recruited in Quebec, about 7,000 were recruited from the 1,500,000 French Catholic population and the 30,000 were recruited from the 500,000 of the other race. To keep up the same proportion as the other sections of the population French Canadian Catholics would have to contribute 70,000 instead of 7,000. It appears that Catholic Ireland has done at least 30 per cent. better than Catholic Quebec.

Ireland was on the eve of getting the home rule that it was clamoring for for so many years when the war started. The strongest argument that had been used by the anti-home rulers was that with home rule Catholic Ireland would not only start a policy of persecution against the Protestant minority, but could not be trusted in case of war with other powers. Home rule advocates, on the other hand, maintained that with home rule Ireland, as a part of the British Empire, would be as loyal as the other parts of the empire.. The recent rebellion in Ireland, however, has shaken the faith of many former sympathizers with home rule in England and Scotland and other places, and it is very doubtful if the Home Rule bill, passed before the war start-

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ed, will be approved after the war by those in England and Scotland who voted for it before.

In Quebec the Catholic Church has special privileges that no other Church has in Canada, and still she does not seem to be satisfied. She is authorized by the treaty made at the conquest of Canada to collect tithes from her own adherents. Since the war started—and especially since the declaration of war by Italy against Austria—a violent anti-recruiting campaign has been carried on by a section of the adherents of that Church without interference by the Dominion Government. It is suggested by some that the leniency shown to this faction, while strong measures have been taken against others for less heinous offenses of the same character, is due to the fact the present occupant of the **Ministry of Justice was educated by the Jesuits.**

The strangest feature of the whole business is that the party now in power, **known as the Tory or Conservative Party, had made an alliance at the time of its election with the extreme ultramontane party.** While the Canadian hierarchy is said to have advised its people to do their part like their fellow-countrymen by enlisting in the imperial army, this advice seems to have no effect whatever, while the anti-recruiting party seems to be carrying the province. It has been suggested that the Church is playing a double game, and that, while it openly proclaims its loyalty, it is secretly working the other way through the confessional and otherwise.

In this connection we must now try to examine the head organization of this extraordinary institution. The Church of Rome aims at world power; it claims to be the only supreme agency between God and man on earth. It never favored the rise of any strong political power that it could not control. Its antagonism to the policy of France and Italy in recent years is well known. It still wishes to get the City of Rome and the Lost Provinces under its control. The ultramontanes in Quebec have openly declared that they would not favor the crushing of Austria—their last hope for the restoration of the Pope's lost temporal power—between the upper and lower millstones of Russia's Greek Church and what they call infidel Italy.

What will happen after the war is a very interesting question. For over two hundred years after the overthrow of the power of the Church of Rome in the British Isles, Roman Catholics had practically no political rights at all. The laws against granting them political rights were made by people who had been Catholics and had thrown off the yoke of the Church. Emancipation laws were passed by Protestants who imagined that by giving their Catholic fellow-citizens equal rights they could be depended on to take their part shoulder to shoulder with their neighbors to defend their country. All these expectations have lately been shattered by the extraordinary attitude of the major part of the Catholic population of Ireland and Quebec. It is true that a small number of them are doing their part nobly with the rest of their fellow-countrymen in defense of the empire, but unfortunately they are a very, very small section, and the heavy burden of the defense of their country, as well as ours, is laid upon the shoulders of the other portion of the population. Fortunately for the empire, however, when the total population of 400,000,000 is taken into consideration, the Catholic section that refrains from doing its share of this serious work is a very small section.

One redeeming feature in Canada is that English and French speaking Catholics are at loggerheads. The quarrel over the bilingual schools in Ontario, which the Quebec Catholics use as an

excuse from refraining from taking their part in the war, is between the Irish and French Catholics, and is practically of no concern to other people at all. The Irish have lost the language of their own ancestors, and are now included among the English-speaking people. Forgetting their own ancient language, however, and learning the English instead, has not made them more loyal in their cooperation in imperial matters with their English and Scotch neighbors, as some people foolishly imagined.

The question now rises: Will people who refuse to take part in the defense of their country have equal political rights with those who defend their country when the war is over? Will they have the same right to vote and have a share in making the laws with those who have offered their lives for the defense of the country? I think not. There is nothing sure in this world but "death and taxes". Catholics have often been warned that the only way to secure the continuation of the policy of equal rights was for them to do their share equally with their neighbors of other religious beliefs in times of crisis. As they have failed to respond to the call, if some of their former privileges are ultimately curtailed, they will have nobody but themselves to blame.

## LAST RETURNS

According to an item in the Montreal Gazette, Oct. 12th, 1916, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland stated that 92,404 Catholics and 62,391 Protestants had joined the army from various parts of Ireland since mobilization. No one rejoices more at this good news than the undersigned.

## POSTSCRIPT

The foregoing article appeared in the October number of "Current History", published by the New York Times, but was deleted from the Canadian edition on advice of the local manager of the Montreal News Co. It was published also in the Toronto Orange Sentinel of October 5th, but they also deleted the reference to the Jesuits and "The Unholy Alliance" between the Tories and the Ultramontanes at the last election in 1911. As far as their theologies are concerned the Catholic Church, the Mohammeddan Church, the Greek Church, the Jewish Church and all Protestants sects are all the same to me. I will always oppose any political party that makes an alliance with any of them. Let them all run on the voluntary principle only. To my knowledge the Conservative Party of Canada made an alliance twice with the Ultramontane party in Canada against the liberal party of which Sir Wilfrid Laurier, a French Canadian Liberal Catholic has been leader, because he refused to make a political alliance with any church, therefore the Church supported the Conservative Party with a Protestant premier. Sir Wilfrid won the first battle, lost the second, but he is going to win out in the third battle at the next election. Personally, I have no sympathy whatever with the anti-French campaign in Ontario or anywhere else. On the contrary, I believe in a wider Celtic Renaissance for the perpetuation of both the French and Gaelic languages.

If the native Irish had sense enough to know the right side to take in the present crisis my sympathies would have been more with them than with the Tories of Ulster as I have much more in common with the former than the latter on the question of land reform and disestablishment. The misfortune is that they played into the hands of the Tories by their foolish antics during a grave crisis. My sympathies are with France and Italy in their fight for liberty, against clericalism. I objected long ago to the introduction of the political quarrels between the Vatican and France and Italy into the politics

of the British Empire. If Italians or French want the services of the Catholic Church or any other church they can easily get them, but if they do not want them they have a right to do without them, but I deny absolutly the right of outsiders to try to force any religious yoke on either individuals or nations. I deny their divine rights theories altogether. Let those who want their services pay for them. As national institutions they should be disestablished as soon as the people get wise enough to cease to believe in them. Those who call themselves Nationalists in Quebec are not Nationalists at all as they are composed exclusively of extreme Catholic fanatics.

To the credit of the Irish it must be said that they are true nationalists, as they receive Protestants with open arms and in fact many of their most famous leaders have been Protestants, I take issue with the present Conservative Government of Canada for allowing the Quebec Ultramontanes to conduct a seditious and treasonable campaign to be carried on during war time which is contrary to any precedent found in any country in the world's history during such a crisis as the present. The Quebec agitation could easily have been suppressed in the bud but no effort was made by the Government to stop it. The querrel between the Greek Church and the Catholic Church in the Balkans started the war and Ultramontane politics in Quebec and Ireland put a wet blanket on recruiting in these places. While I know of no grievance the Catholic Church had in Quebec or Ireland before the war the Empire now has a very just grievance against that institution now and the recent antics of many of the adherents of that Church justified the recent action of France and Italy in curbing their activities in these countries.

If the Irish and French Canadian Catholics had followed the advice of the great Daniel O'Connell "Take religion but not your politics from Rome", it would have been a wise thing to do.

This pamphlet therefore is not in any sense against the Catholic religion any more than any other religion, but against the present Conservative Government for allowing foreign political issues to be agitated in Canada during War time.

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